
**Children & Family Services
Committee**

HB 2996

Brief Description: Creating a pilot program concerning trauma mitigation for children.

Sponsors: Representatives Walsh, Haler, Kagi, Roberts, Hankins and Santos.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates the Trauma Mitigation for Children Pilot Program for children removed from their home by Child Protective Services.

Hearing Date: 1/25/06

Staff: Sydney Forrester (786-7120).

Background:

The Children's Administration Child Protective Services (CPS) investigates allegations of child abuse and neglect. CPS workers have authority to remove children from their home when harm or the serious risk of harm warrants removal. In emergent cases where children are immediately removed from their home, there is often an event or period of trauma that precedes removal. Various researchers have concluded that the psychological distress caused by trauma experienced in infancy or early childhood can compromise healthy brain development and result in a variety of problem later in life. Researchers also have identified certain trauma-mitigation techniques for treating children exposed to trauma.

Summary of Bill:

A three-year pilot program for providing trauma mitigation services to children is established. The Trauma Mitigation for Children Pilot Program will be administered jointly by the Children's Administration and the Division of Mental Health within the Department of Social and Health Services. The pilot will be implemented at the Safe Harbor Crisis Nursery located in Kennewick. The Department may select one additional site based on community need and resources.

Program Structure:

The pilot must provide for:

- (1) implementing a regional trauma mitigation early intervention program for children;
- (2) creating a community-based response to the impact of trauma on children; and

(3) identifying and strengthening local resources for developmentally appropriate services for children and families who have experienced trauma.

Program Services:

The program will serve children birth to age twelve who have been removed from their home by Child Protective Services (CPS). Children birth to six years of age, and sibling groups with children under six and up to twelve years of age may receive twenty-four hour group receiving care for up to seven days immediately following removal by CPS. The purpose of receiving care is to prepare children for transition to foster care. After the transition to foster care, children not enrolled in school may receive post-trauma child day care for up to thirty days. Child day care will include play therapy, art therapy, and music therapy as developmentally appropriate. For school age siblings, post-trauma interventions will be provided once a week for up to thirty days. Follow-up assessments will be conducted for each child at time of exit, and at six months and one year after exit.

The pilot program also will offer training for professionals, parents, foster parents, and caregivers regarding the impacts of exposure to trauma and the evidence-based interventions for mitigation of impacts. A report is due to Legislature in September 2009.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on 1/18/06.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.